



Making sense of the challenge of smoking cessation during pregnancy: a phenomenographic approach

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Phenomenology/Phenomenography

- Phenomenology aims to describe essence and commonality: how the phenomenon really is
- Phenomenography is to investigate and describe the qualitatively different ways in which people experience, understand, see and relate to phenomenon in the lived world

Phenomenography cont'd

- Phenomenography is not a research method, but rather a set of assumptions about humans, about science and about how we acquire knowledge about other peoples ways of experiencing the world
- The area of interest in phenomenography is the relationship between the phenomenon and the individual revealing (often taken for granted) foundations for human ways of acting within and perceiving the world
- It is the variation in ways of seeing which is the object of investigation for phenomenography

Study

- Sweden
- 50% stop smoking in pregnancy
- Low level of education in those who continue to smoke
- ? Current methods of health education are more appropriate for higher educated women
- Health screening / education begins at 8-12/40
- Midwives approached women .Details passed to researcher

Method

- 17 women who smoked through pregnancy
- 17 tape recorded interviews transcribed verbatim: “what is your view of smoking during pregnancy?”
- After 12 interviews, a set of 5 preliminary categories were formulated
- The last 5 interviews were conducted in the same way but the interviewees were asked to comment on the 5 categories

Results

- General characteristics: egocentric
 - Constituted shameful behaviour
- Before pregnancy, all had expected to stop smoking
- In this conflict, various elements included experiences, hearsay, scientific facts, social circumstances and well being were struggled with.

Results cont...

- The way the women presented risks was more of a construction
- Leavey 2000
- For some, making sense of smoking would be stable, for others the story would change once, but for others there could be a fluctuation between different stories over a longer time span

Story Types

- 1) smoking can be justified
- A protective wall of reasons
 - “I only smoke low strength cigarettes”
 - “there’s lots that’s more dangerous”
 - “Smoking helps reduce aggression and improves my ability to have good social relationships”

Story Types 2

- 2) will stop smoking later
 - Smoking and pregnancy was merely a backdrop and not even considered
- “Day after day, smoking cessation is something you are aiming for, but later, after just this last one cigarette”
- Personal experience and hearsay considered to be more reliable

Story Types 3

- 3) my smoking might hurt the baby
- The combination of the internalisation of the risks for the child with a lack of capability to gain control over the smoking makes the woman feel miserable during the pregnancy
- Not being able to quit was faced and smoking was not defended as long as no one commented on it. As soon as someone challenged the smoking, a defensive posture was taken

Story Types 4

- 4) smoking is just given up
- Smoking cessation was natural in the context of the pregnancy- you just did it
- BUT it was rational to take up smoking again postnatally i.e.. They had never stopped, rather taken a break
- The absence of smoking by other members of the family was important to this group

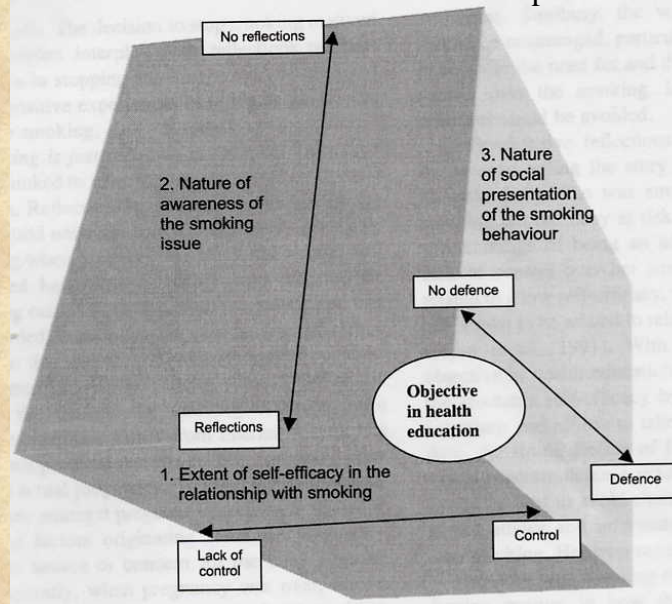
Story Types 5

- 5) Smoking must be taken charge of
- Smoking is described as an addiction that you must liberate yourself from
- The well being caused by smoking needed to be replaced during cessation. The satisfaction from acting in line with what you believed was best for yourself and your child could be a substitute

Discussion

- The 5 story types are illustrations within the collective space of how pregnant women who smoke present their smoke
- This is shown diagrammatically as:

The 3 dimensions and the extremes within the presented story type



Dimension 1

- Extent of self-efficacy in the relationship with smoking
- i.e.. How much the woman expresses a need to take control as a pre requisite for cessation.
- Extremes: lack of control and control
- (relate to 4/5 just give up/ take charge of)

Dimension 2

- Nature of awareness of meaning of the smoking issue
- Relates to how much the woman has made explicit the whole picture of smoking
- The identification of being a smoker, being pregnant and the baby's well being is dependent on her smoking are parts of this picture
- Extremes: reflection and no reflection
- (relate to 2/3 will stop later/smoking might harm the baby)

Dimension 3

- Nature of social presentation of smoking behaviour
- This demonstrates how easily the woman reacts defensively when other people challenge her smoking
- Extremes: defence and no defence
- (relates to 1) smoking can be justified

Conclusions

- There is potential for women to move anywhere on the different axes of the dimensions depending on life encounters
- Ideally towards the corner control of reflective and not defensive
- Fluctuations in the story types is basically different to the stability implied in the Stages of Change Model

Conclusions cont...

- Opportunity for the woman to tell her story may open up her experiences
- This would encourage the woman's movement towards reflection on the meaning of smoking, feelings of control and avoidance of defence
- Provides basis for smoking cessation in long run in that authors consider this important in showing how to cope with social circumstances without resorting to smoking

Conclusion cont'd

- "In traditional health education, giving information about risks of smoking is seen as crucial, whereas a smoking cessation programme based on dialogue might raise awareness by offering a possibility to sort out the experience of smoking
- It would even be counter productive to smoking cessation to give information without the woman's consent as this would push her into a defensive posture and decrease her self efficacy"

Last Word

- Approach to health education in ante natal care needs to move from information transfer and advice giving to information exchange.
- Lee and Garvin 2003

